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1964-07-10, Bette to Parents

Bette J. Barto

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Subject Terms

Women and the military, Women and war, United States -- Air Force, United States -- Army -- Air Forces, Photographs, Armed Forces -- Correspondence, Correspondence -- Vietnam War -- 1961-1975, Christmas

Summary

This collection contains 139 correspondence from Maj. Bette J. Barto, USAFE to her parents while serving as a nurse during the late 1950s and 1960s. Also included are three photographs, one special orders document, and one marriage license. In several cases, Bette refers to her parents as "Lizzie" and "Hugh Elmer," or simply "Elmer." Three letters from 1961 or 1962 are undated and placed in a separate folder.

Keywords

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Friday Afternoon

10 July 1964

Dear Mom and Daddy,!

Guess ~~who~~ who has a new Smith-Corona typewriter ? Ray lost his head and came home carrying it tonight. I have wanted one for a long time, but I am always thinking of something that I had rather have for the house. It is a real beauty, but I have forgotten a lot of what little I once knew about the typewriter. It will be a big help with a lot of the paperwork that we have to bring home with us, though.

We have had a busy and hard week. It seems that is the worst part of having a leave. We had to work like crazy getting everything in line before leaving, trying to anticipate everything that could come up while we were gone. Then we were swamped with new things when we got back. I felt I hadn't been anywhere in about two hours after I got to work Monday. I am worn out tonite, and I know Ray is, for he had a near accident today in his Tactical Evaluation Flight- a regular check they have to have every so often-. He had a series of explosive sounds in the tail-section of his plane and lost all of his electrical equipment. He brought the plane in anyway, and everyone, including the Wing Commander, was there on the flight line to meet him and pat him on the back for getting it home where they can strip it down and possibly find out what has been the cause of all the previous trouble with the airplane. After all that, they then told him he will be going TDY again in August for approximately 45 days to Fort Benning, Georgia, as an Air Liason Officer with the Army. He is so mad he could spit, but he may get out of it because his Commander has been away and is due back tomorrow. His dentist told him he had better stay here until he gets his teeth fixed this time, or he stands a good chance of losing all his permanent teeth because of this gum infection. I am afraid the Airforce is not too interested in his teeth. I hope I am wrong.

I havent had my old maid, Thelma,² back~~s~~ since we got home. One of the other wives gave me her maid's address, and, after hearing how she was pleaded with her, I called;

so I have asked her to come and try the chores next Friday. She is older and certainly a lot more friendly than Thelma was. The only problem is that she can't read very much; thus her instructions will have to be verbal, but I can solve that by calling her each Friday, after time for her to get here, and tell her anything new I want done.

Saturday morning

Today is a busy day for us. I have to do the rest of the house, and Ray has the yard to mow. The mowing wont be so bad, but the little boy who mowed while we were gone did not edge anywhere, and it has really grown in nearly six weeks. The two nice rains we had ,plus our fertilizer-job, has really perked up the nearly dead grass. Our little dogwood trees are all dead, with the possible exception of the largest one in the left corner of the front yard. I can't imagine what has gotten to them, but it must be something in the ground, for they are dying from the roots up. We hope to get some crepe myrtle to take their place, but we thought we should wait until later on in the fall to give them the best chance to survive.

Sunday morning

This is probably the most disjointed letter you have gotten in some time, but I had to quit and work yesterday, and then, last nite, Ray and I were both so stiff and sore from bending and working in the yard, we took our baths and went to bed without eating much supper. I had chicken thawed, and was too tired to cook it; so Ray ordered dinner from the club and then he was too tired to eat. Gent and I ate what we could and the rest was a waste.

Ray finished the edging in the back-yard, while I typed a rough copy of an efficiency report he had to write on one of our friends who has rotated to Germany- where Marie and Dick are.

I havent heard from Marie yet, but I imagine she has received your gift by now. I insured it so I am sure she has it. I would like to have seen her

face when she opened it. I am sure she never expected to get anything so lovely from me. I guess I liked Marie better than I have liked anyone in a long time, besides Anne Bullington and Betsy. Some things about her weren't to my taste, but I am sure I didn't always please her either.

General Graham invited himself to eat supper with us tonite in a very cute manner. He said he would barbecue doves, if I would furnish the salad and the boiled corn, like I had once before when he ate with us last year. So Ray and I went shopping for corn and fresh salad makings yesterday. We are to go up to the Generals house to help supervise the dove-cooking, and then return here to eat them. He said he could cook better on his own grill, but he didn't know where the dishes are in his house. His wife deserts him every summer for three months and stays in Maine. She doesn't associate with us socially anyway; so this is really the only time we get to see the General- except when he drops by and sits a few minutes with us in the afternoon just after work. He knows how she is and just ignores her, so we feel he must really enjoy his little visits with us since she disapproves so completely.

We have a busy social week coming up- wither feast or famine is the way it is with us. We have a Promotion Party to attend Wednesday nite for Ray's squadron commander and one Chaplain, another officer in his squadron, and one officer he knew 8 to 10 years ago. All but one of them made Lt. Col. and the other made Major. They all pin on their new rank on Wednesday. Then one of the ranking full Colonels in the Wing is transferring to another base and the wing is giving him a going-away party on Saturday night. Our squadron wives are giving his wife a Breakfast and Coffee on Thursday morning at the Club. I am invited to that too, but my chances of getting away from work long enough to attend are slender. I may try to run over for a few minutes to pay my respects to the lady, for she is one of the higher ranking officers' wives that I think is worth the time. She has been very nice to me, and never seems aware of their position in the Wing.

It is pouring rain now, so I hope the General remembered to put his grill in the carport. We barely got our chairs and grill in before the down-pour began. I have to stop this and get Gent in the bathtub. He is long overdue for a bath, and begins to smell a great deal like a puppy dog, and that will never do. I didn't want to wash him too often for his skin gets dry so easily. I had to scrub him too much while camping. He will need clipping again this week, but I cant wait that long to bathe hime.

We just finished sasuage, scrambled eggs, sliced tomatoes, onions, and toast. Ray and Gent are having their after-chow nap while I finish~~e~~ this and the dishes.

I hope things have improved at your house, Mom. I wish you could come over and visit us a while. I know it is a long ~~trip~~, but its so pretty here at ~~this~~ time of the year- even with the terrible heat. Now that we have a new condenser- whatever that is- in our air-conditioner, we have a nice cool haouse again. None of the flowers died, in spite of the heat, so all's well in the house-plant department.

I quit for now and will do better as I learn to type!

Love,

Bette, Ray and Gent